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Legends

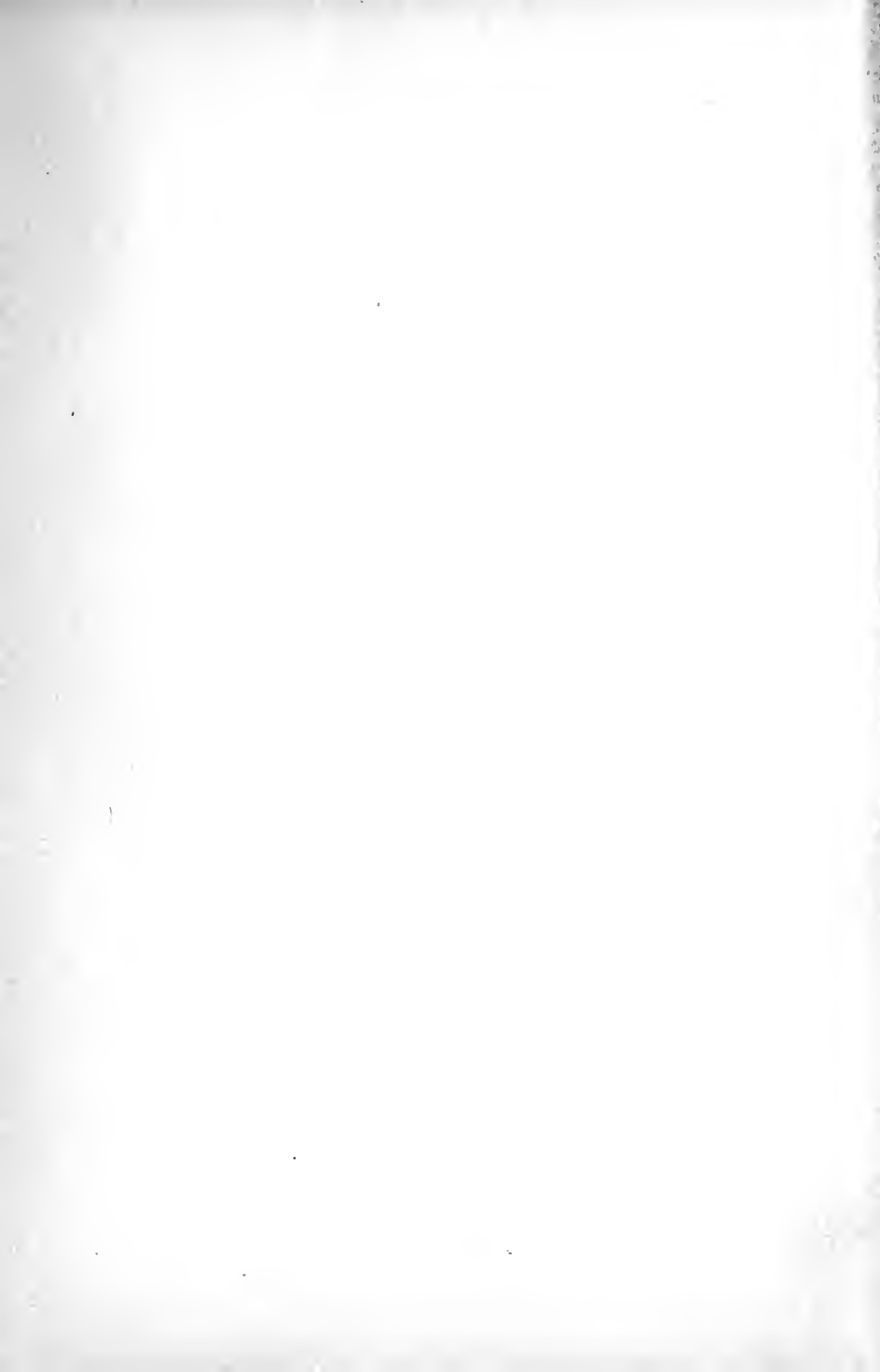
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Ancient Legends

of

Different Nations

Many of them from old books now out of print

Compiled by

Elizabeth M. Linn



New Haven :

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1902

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TO

My Dear Little Mother

THIS BOOK IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

“ Books are made from books ”

—VOLTAIRE

Contents

	Page
Sir Galahad and the Rose Maiden,	9
The Vision of Sir Launfal,	11
St. Augustine,	16
The Wall Flower (Scottish Legend),	17
The Dedication of the Cathedral (Time, 1401),	18
The Rose-colored Lotus,	21
The Dying Viking,	22
The Making of the Humming-Bird (an Indian Legend),	25
How Lady Blanche Arundel held Wardour for King Charles,	26
The Moss Rose,	34
The Death of Winklereid (Battle of Sempach, 1386),	35
The Cormorant, the Bat and the Bramble (from the Persian),	41
The Old Cathedral Organist (an old English Legend),	42

	Page
The Nightingale and the Rose (Eastern Legend),	45
The Legend of the Lockharts,	46
The Lily of the Valley (from the French),	51
Guido's Model,	53
The Violet (from the German),	56
The Great West Window (an old Cathedral Legend),	58
The Goldenrod (Bavarian Lore),	61
Staufenberg (a Legend of the Rhine),	62
The Schoolboy King. A Legend of Napoleon (a Scene at Brienne),	73

Ancient Legends

Sir Galahad and the Rose Maiden

In the days of King Arthur and the Round Table there lived in an old German town a quaint little maiden called by her friends the Rose Maiden.

She loved the beautiful roses above all flowers and her garden filled with their choicest blooms was her especial pride. The pure white rose, her favorite, she had earnestly striven to procure; but alas! it grew among the crags of the steepest mountains, and only to him of pure heart, of lofty mind, and of strong purpose, was given the power to find it.

As Sir Galahad, bravest of knights, rode forth upon his noble steed, armed for the quest of the "Holy Grail," the little maid approached and said, "Pray, Sir Knight, will you not bring to me the white rose for my garden, for only he of purest heart has the power to obtain it?"

The knight replied, "I will first search for the rose, and if my heart be pure enough to find it, then shall I know that I may go in search of the "Holy Grail," and return victorious.

The maid, with eager expectancy, awaited the knight's return; and when she saw the noble charger, proud of his knightly rider, approaching her garden, and when the knight gave into her hands the pure white rose, she was content.

"What may I do, Sir Knight," gratefully said the little maid, "that may show my deep thankfulness?"

"Grant me," replied Sir Galahad, "the right to wear upon my heart when riding forth upon my holy quest the first bloom from this precious plant."

"It shall be as you wish," gladly assented the little maid.

Then rode away with hopeful heart the noble knight. Since that time the white rose is held to be the most dearly loved of all the roses, and an emblem of purity of heart, loftiness of mind, and strength of purpose. "And maidens ever, with it against their heart, may dream of him whose future life they'll share."

The Vision of Sir Launfal

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

(By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,
And through the dark arch a charger sprang,
Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight,
In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright
It seemed the dark castle had gathered all
Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its
wall

In his siege of three hundred summers long,
And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,
Had cast them forth: so, young and strong
And lightsome as a locust leaf,
Sir Launfal flashed forth in his unscarred mail,
To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

* * *

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,
For another heir in his earldom sate;
An old, bent man, worn out and frail,
He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;
Little he recked of his earldom's loss,
No more on his surcoat was blazoned the cross,
But deep in his soul the sign he wore,
The badge of the suffering and the poor.

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare,
 Was idle mail 'gainst the barbed air,
 For it was just at the Christmas time.
 So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,
 And sought for a shelter from cold and snow
 In the light and warmth of long ago;
 He sees the snake-like caravan crawl
 O'er the edge of the desert, black and small,
 Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,
 He can count the camels in the sun,
 As over the red-hot sands they pass
 To where, in its slender necklace of grass,
 The little spring laughed and leapt in the shade,
 And with its own self, like an infant, played,
 And waved its signal of palms.

"For Christ's sweet sake I beg an alms";—
 The happy camels may reach the spring,
 But Sir Launfal sees only the grewsome thing,
 The leper, lank as the rain-blanchèd bone,
 That cowers beside him, a thing as lone
 And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas
 In the desolate horror of his disease.

And Sir Launfal said—"I behold in thee
 An image of Him who died on the tree;
 Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns—

Thou also hast had the world's buffets and
scorns,—

And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side.
Will Mary's son acknowledge me;
Behold through Him I give to thee!"

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he
Remembered in what a haughtier guise
He had flung an alms to leprosie,
When he girt his young life up in gilded mail
And set forth in search for the Holy Grail.
The heart within him was ashes and dust,
He parted in twain his single crust,
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,
And gave the leper to eat and drink;
'Twas a mouldy crust of coarse brown bread,
'Twas water out of a wooden bowl,—
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed,
And 'twas red wine he drank with his thirsty
soul.

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,

Shining and fair and tall and straight
 As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful gate,—
 Himself the Gate whereby men can enter the
 temple of God in Man.

His words were shed softer than leaves from
 the pines,
 And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the
 brine

Which mingle their softness and quiet in one
 With the shaggy unrest they float down upon;
 And the voice that was calmer than silence
 said,

“Lo it is I, be not afraid!

In many climes without avail,
 Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
 Behold it is here,—this cup which thou
 Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;
 This crust is my body broken for thee,
 This water His blood that died on the tree;
 The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
 In whatso we share with another's need;
 Not what we give, but what we share,—
 For the gift without the giver is bare;
 Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
 Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.”

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swoond:—
 “The Grail in my castle here is found!
 Hang my idle armor upon the wall,
 Let it be the spider’s banquet-hall;
 He must be fenced with stronger mail
 Who would seek and find the Holy Grail.”

The castle gate stands open now,
 And the wanderer is welcome to the hall
 As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;
 No longer scowl the turrets tall,
 The summer’s long siege at last is o’er,
 When the first poor outcast went in at the door
 She entered with him in disguise
 And mastered the fortress by surprise.
 There is no spot she loves so well on ground,
 She lingers and smiles there the whole year
 round;
 The meanest serf on Sir Launfal’s land
 Has halls and bower at his command;
 And there’s no poor man in the North Countree
 But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

St. Augustine

As St. Augustine was one day walking by the sea, musing intently upon the mysteries of Heaven and earth, his eye rested upon a child, diligently making a hole in the sand.

"Tell me, little one," said the saint, "why are you working so earnestly?"

"I am digging a hole," the child replied, "in which to pour the ocean."

At that instant a voice from Heaven was heard, saying, "Be not dismayed, O St. Augustine, for it is as impossible for you to understand infinity, as for the child to pour the great ocean into the hole in the sand. Strive, therefore, not to understand, only to have faith and believe."

The Wall flower

(SCOTTISH LEGEND.)

In bygone days, a castle stood near the river Tweed, in which a fair maiden was imprisoned, having plighted her troth and given her affection to the young heir of a neighboring clan.

Blood having been shed between the chiefs on both sides, the deadly hatred thus engendered forbade all thoughts of a union.

The lover tried various stratagems to obtain the fair one, and at last succeeded in gaining admission to the castle in the guise of a wandering troubadour, and arranged that she should effect her escape, while he waited with an armed force without the castle gates. But alas! for this plan; Herrick says:

“Up she got upon a wall
Attempted down to slide withal;
But the silken twist untied,
She fell, and bruised, she died,
And her loving, luckless speed,
Twined her to the plant we call
Now, the ‘Flower of the Wall.’”

The Dedication of the Cathedral

(TEMP. 1401.)

WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM (*moribundus*)
loquitur:

Slow from the basement, measured stone by
stone,

Slow as the rings of rind around an oak,
Has grown this building dedicate to God,
Until at last the gilt star of the vane
Gleams in mid-air, and seems to crown the
whole

As with a royal seal. Father of Light,
Mercy, and Love, accept this offering,
Poor earthly tabernacle, miserable type
Of heavenly mansions,—opal, chrysopras,
Jacinth, and emerald,—soon by Eden's gate
To meet my gaze, but in His own good time.
Then let the hand of marble effigy
Hold on my tomb the Founder's carved shrine,
To show this long and patient work of mine
That's now accomplished. Thunder, tamed to
breathe

Forth angel's music, shake the vaulted choir
Till the great pillars vibrate; harmonies

Soar to the poised roof—yes, soar and float,
And bring me foretastes of the heaven beyond.

Saints, keep me humble—for this human heart
Is a mere nest of pride, ambition, greed—
Until the “Spirit” come, the Shekinah,
And dwell within, and claim it all for God.
Better than trampled vines and shattered mills
Won by the red-stained lance, to see this house
Raised to God’s glory and His ceaseless
praise.

Races may come and go, and kings be born,
Or slain in battle; statesmen shape the world
Unto fresh issues; still men’s prayers shall
rise

From this my building night and day for age.
See the great windows, like the jewelled gates
Of Paradise, burning with harmless fire.

Forests of stone, ye columns, spring in joy,
And bear your holy burden; round ye twine
The wayside flowers, types of God’s gracious
love,

Sent for their beauty only, to cheer man.
Grant me, ye saints, one prayer—only one
prayer—

That when the cardinals in crimson train,
The mitred bishops, and acolytes,

The censer-swingers and the pale meek monks,
Enter the western door, and welcoming hymns
Break forth like birds in Spring, and every
face

Turns where the tapers and the banners come,
I may repeat the song of Simeon,
And pass at once as in a summer dream;
My God and Saviour, so I die of joy,
And pass rejoicing to my heavenly home,
Soothed by the thought that in a whirlwind
age,

Mid clash of swords and flights of crossbow
bolts

And darkening arrows, I have helped to bring
Thoughts of a purer, nobler life to some,
And reared a refuge for Faith, Hope, and
Love.

The Rose-colored Lotus

The Emperor Adrian, while on a hunting trip one day, was separated from his guard, and while wandering through the forest with only one attendant, came upon an immense lion, who was drinking from a pool. The attention of the beast was attracted by the breaking of a twig, and leaping upon them, he caught the Emperor beneath his paw.

The brave attendant directed the attack toward himself and was slain.

Where his blood stained the bank of the pool, a lotus blossomed as a remembrance of his self-sacrifice.

The Dying Viking

I.

Bring me my armour, Sigurd,
I'll die as my fathers died,
Not like a wolf in a shepherd's trap,
But in all a warrior's pride.
Strike on the brazen targets,
And let our clarions ring;
I'll meet this Death they talk of,
As a king should meet a king.

II.

Olaf, take you my vessels
With the dark and threatening sails,
Go forth and scare the Saxon,
Harry his fertile vales;
Dye helm and hauberk crimson,
Ply well the sword and torch;
Go brain the Mercian bishops
In their shattered temple porch.

III.

And thou, my bowman, Harold,
Be thine to plunder France.
Smite with the axe and hammer
At the vine-grower's lance.
Sack churches, fire the homesteads,
Turn red the muddy Seine;
Burn standing corn and orchard,
Make barren every plain.

IV.

Ye are my raven-feeders,
Ye are my warrior brood,
Be yours to give the falcons
The cravens for their food.
But, Oscar, thou my youngest,
Thou hast thy mother's face,
Be thine to guard the peasants,
And found a peaceful race.

V.

Thou shalt bring home some maiden,
With eyes like violet flowers
When they spring up sweeter, fresher,
After the sunny showers.

You'll let the pine-woods dwindle
Around our fortress hill,
And corn in golden billows
Gird many a freeman's mill.

VI.

But quick,—my heart beats slower,
Life's sand is running fast,
Out with a thousand galleys—
I hear the quickening blast—
One hour, and in Luffoden
Our walrus-horns shall ring,
For I'll meet this Death they talk of,
As a king should meet a king.

The Making of the Hummingbird

AN INDIAN LEGEND.

(By permission of Miss Annie A. Preston and the
St. Nicholas.)

A bird and a bee in the fresh April weather,
Sailed blithely to meet the first Summer
together

'Twas a very small bird, and a very large bee,
And they talked as they flew, and they couldn't
agree

As to which of the two should first greet the
sweet Summer,

The bright-plumaged bird, or the busy young
hummer.

All at once a black wind storm dropped down
from the skies,

And it took this small quarreling pair by
surprise.

It whirled them about, until drenched and half
dead

They both tumbled into a violet bed.

When the sun shone again—(this is what I
have heard),

That bird was a bee, and that bee was a bird;
And only one creature went humming away,
Dipping into the flower-cups, that fresh April
day.

How Lady Blanche Arundel Held Wardour for King Charles

The first of May, the garland day, that ushers
in the Spring,
Saw Wardour Castle fair and strong in arms
for Charles the king;
The elms were black with noisy rooks, the
meadows gilt with flowers,
With rosary of blossoms, Time counted the
dying hours.
The butler moved his casks about, the chap-
lain was at bowls,
The grooms were hissing in the stalls, the boys
played with the foals;
The Lady Blanche among her maids was busy
as the best,
Unconscious that the carrion-crow was hover-
ing o'er her nest.
All suddenly a group of us, upon an outer wall,
Was startled by a warning shout from those
within the hall,
And down the wind-tossed avenue, from out a
storm of dust,
Galloped a wounded serving-man, whose hel-
met was all rust.

One—two—then three, poor frightened knaves,
with faces gashed and torn,
One with a broken sword red-wet, who
screamed upon a horn;
And then a rout of flying men, groaning and
very white,
Each swearing, as he hoped for grace, Crom-
well would come that night.
That night our scouts were pouring in, each
paler than the last,
The shepherds brought us news of Strode, and
many a troop they'd passed;
A moment Lady Blanche turned pale, but soon
flashed angry red,
To think old England's golden crown should
deck a hewer's head.
All night the melting lead was poured into
our bullet-moulds,
The rusty pikes were lifted down from the
long-ratchet-holds,
Great stones were piled upon each ledge, the
guns were duly scoured,
Upon the highest tower our flag of angry
challenge lowered.
The falconets were double charged in every
bartizan,
Ready to shower the fiery lead on frowning
Puritan;

And every one got out his scarf and plume to
 ready be,—
 For gallant face brave men should wear when
 danger's on the lee.
 The chaplain on his cassocked knees a rusty
 breast-plate scoured;
 The butler, in a plumed hat, above all others
 towered;
 The very turnspit marched about, with gun
 and partizan,
 As noisy with his threats and oaths as any
 serving-man.

II.

Oh, never daisy wore a frill more trim or yet
 more white,
 No primrose of the early Spring was purer to
 the sight;
 The fleecy clouds of Summer dawn more with
 such stately grace,
 Unchanging morning sunshine shone from out
 her pretty face.
 No fawn trips so, no mountain roe a lighter
 footprint leaves;
 The violet loved to have her tread upon its
 purple leaves;

Before her gentle presence birds ceased not
their carolling;
She shed a tranquil joy on all, as does the
early Spring.
She never chid her serving-maids about their
tapestry;
And yet, of all that busy hive, she was the fair
Queen Bee.
For idleness, or ribaldry, or drunken revelling
sport,
Dared never e'er to set a foot within the inner
court.
She was as gentle as a dove brooding upon its
nest;
Yet when that evil news with shrieks came
sweeping from the west,
And pale-faced fools were pouring in with
news of deadly harm,
She changed at once—a sudden storm broke
flashing from that calm.
Her husband and her lord had gone unto the
tented field,
To wring from stone-faced Puritans what
Puritans would yield;
She was alone without a friend, yet never
thought of fear,
For gathered in her castle walls was food for
seven year.

III.

That sullen night, just at the dusk, from out
those dark fir-trees
A muffled drum, with mournful throb, sounded
upon the breeze;
And dark and slow the Puritans began their
leaguer then,
Not in the open manly way of honest gentlemen.
They burnt our stacks, they fired our barns,
they harried us all day;
At night they poured the hot shot in where we
stood firm at bay.
They scorched our walls, they blackened doors,
they splintered roof and pane,
But to the brave old trusty place no entrance
could they gain.
Our mossy walls laughed out to see that grim
and yellow host
Spur round and round old Wardour's towers,
like couriers riding post.
Their pikes were thirsting for our blood, yet
we were snug and warm,—
All under Wardour's battlements were safe
from every storm.
One day a pale-faced trumpeter the rebel dogs
sent in,

The gall and bile were oozing through his
 scurvy sallow skin;
 He bade us all surrender to this Cromwell,
 "England's lord";
 The women were to go in peace; the men
 yield to the sword.
 Then Lady Blanche tore up the roll, and trod
 it under foot;
 We drove the crop-ear from the gate, with
 scoffing laugh and hoot;
 We crushed his trumpet, snapped his staff, and
 set the dogs at him:
 Ha! but for Lady Blanche's grace they'd torn
 him limb from limb.
 Their swords smote blunt upon our steel, and
 keen upon our buff
 Till coldest-blooded man of us had battering
 enough;
 'Twas butt and butt, and point and point, and
 eager pike to pike,
 'Twas foin and parry, give and take, as long
 as we could strike.
 There, in the breach stood Lady Blanche, a
 banner in her hand,
 Urging us on, with voice and look, to scourge
 this currish band.

She stood amid the fire and flame in the red
gap of the wall,
An angel sent to comfort us—the bravest of
us all.
They thinned our ranks, they kept us there in
arms by night and day,
Till, oozing out in drops, our strength began
to melt away.
We fell asleep while taking food, we scarce
had power to load,
Yet even then our Lady's voice woke us as
with a goad.
The fire balls vexed us night and day, their
mines shook down a tower;
At last, on specious promises of mercy to us
all,
Our Lady Blanche hung out a flag of white
upon the wall.
They burnt our stables, stole our deer, caught
all our fattest carp;
They felled the oaks in the park with axes keen
and sharp;
Unearthed our leaden conduit-pipes, and melted
them in bars;
Tore our great pictures into strips, and split
the floors in stars.

This was the way the rebel dogs a sacred treaty
kept;
Yet God had not forgotten us, nor had His
justice slept;
For that day week Newcastle's "Lambs" fell
on this lying rout
Shot, piked, and sabred half the troop, and
burnt the others out.

The Moss Rose

The angel who guards the flowers, and sprinkles upon them the dews of the still night, slumbered on a Spring day in the shade of a rosebush, and when she awoke said, "Most beautiful of my children, I thank thee for thy refreshing odor, and cooling shade. Should you now ask me any favor, how willingly would I grant it!" The blush on the petals of the sweet rose deepened, and in modest tones she murmured—

"Gladly have I shielded thee from the rays of the morning sun, and have wafted o'er thy slumbers my choicest incense; but if I may ask a blessing it is that I may be adorned with a new charm, the better to cheer the hearts of the children of men."

The angel then departing, dropped in benediction a mantle of delicate green on the dainty blossoms, and the sweet moss rose was added to nature's bouquet of flowers.

The Death of Winkelreid

BATTLE OF SEMPACH, JULY 9, 1386.

In July, when the bees swarmed thick upon
the linden tops,
And farmers gazed with pride and joy upon
their ripening crops,
The watchmen on our tall church towers, looking
t'wards Willistow,
Saw the stacked barley in a flame, and the
wheat-fields in a glow.

For Archduke Leopold had come from Zurich
by the lake,
With lance, and bow, and banner spread, a dire
revenge to take.
On Monday morning, when the dew lay bright
upon the corn,
Each man of Sempach blew alarm upon his
mountain horn.

The young and old from fair Lucerne gathered
to bar the way,
The reapers threw their sickles down, and ran
to join the fray;

We knelt and prayed to Heaven for strength,
crying to God aloud;
And lo! a rainbow rising shone against a
thundercloud.

Burghers of Berne, the lads of Schweitz, and
Unterwalden's best,
Warriors of Uri, strong as bulls, were among
the rest;
The oldest of our mountain priests had come
to fight—not pray,
Our women only kept at home upon that battle
day.

The shepherds, sturdy wrestlers with the grim
mountain bear,
The chamois hunters, lithe and swift, mingle
together there;
Rough boatmen from the mountain lakes, and
fishermen by the scores;
The children only had been left to guard the
nets and oars.

The herdsmen joined us from their huts on the
far mountain-side,
Where cow-bells chimed among the pines, and
far above in pride

The granite peaks rose soaring up in snowy
pinnacles,
Past glaciers' ever-gaping jaws and vulture's
citadels.

The citizens of Zurich town under their banners stood,
Their lusty lances bleak and bare as any winter
wood.
Geneva sent her archers stout, and swordsmen
not a few,
And over the brave men of Berne their great
town banner blew.

How fierce we ran with partisan, and axe, and
spear, and sword,
With flail, and club, and shrieking horns, upon
that Austrian horde!
But they stood silent in the sun, mocking the
Switzer bear,
Their helmets crested, beaked, and fanged, like
the wild beasts they were.

Like miners dipping iron ore from some great
mountain heart,
We strove to hew, and rend, and cleave that
hill of steel apart;

But clamped like statues stood the knights in
their spiked phalanx strong,
Though our Swiss halberds, and our swords,
hewed fiercely at the throng.

Hot, sharp, and thick our arrows fell upon
their helmet crests,
Keen on their visors' glaring bars, and sharp
upon their breasts;
Fierce plied our halberds at the spears, that
thicker seemed to grow;
The more we struck, more boastfully the banners
seemed to blow.

The Austrians, square, and close locked up,
stood firm with threatening spears,
Only the sterner when our bolts flew thick
about their ears;
Our drifts of arrows blinding fell, and nailed
the mail to breast,
But e'en the dead men as they dropped were
ramparts to the rest.

With furnace heat the red sun shone upon the
wall of steel,
And crimsoned every Austrian knight from
helmet unto heel.

They slew their horses where they stood, and
shortened all their spears,
Then back to back, like boars at bay, they
mocked our angry cheers.

Till Winkelreid stepped forth, and said, knitting his rugged brow,
“Out on ye, men of Zurich town! Go back
and tend your plough;
Sluggards of Berne, go hunt and fish, when
danger is not nigh.
See now how Unterwalden taught her hardy
sons to die!”

Then out he rushed with head bent low; his
body, breast, and hands
Bore down a sheaf of spears, and made a path-
way for our bands.
Four lances splintered on his brow, six shivered
in his side,
But still he struggled fiercely on, and, shouting
“Victory!” died.

Then on that broken flying rout, we Swiss,
rejoicing, rushed,
With sword, and mace, and partisan, that
struck, and stabbed, and crushed;

Their banners beaten to the earth and all their
best men slain,
The Austrians threw away their shields and
fled across the plain.

And thus our Switzerland was saved, upon
that Summer's day,
And Sempach saw rejoicing men returning
from the fray.
As we bore home brave Winkelreid a rainbow
spanned our track,
But where the Austrian rabble fled a thunder-
storm rolled black.

The Cormorant, the Bat, and the Bramble

FROM THE PERSIAN.

The cormorant was once a wool merchant. He took into partnership, the bramble and the bat, and they freighted a large ship with wool. She was wrecked, and the firm was also wrecked.

Since the disaster, it is said, the bat hides away during the daytime to avoid his creditors, the cormorant is forever diving into the deep to discover his sunken cargo, while the bramble tries to lure into his thorny grasp every unfortunate sheep that chances to pass his way, in order to recover by stealing what he lost by water.

The Old Cathedral Organist

AN OLD ENGLISH LEGEND.

'Tis forty years ago since first
I climbed these dusty winding stairs
To play the Dean in: how I spurned
Beneath my feet all meaner cares,
When first I leant, my cheek on fire,
And looked down blushing at the choir!

Handel, Haydn, and Mozart—
I thought they watched me as I played;
While Palestrina's stern, sad face
Seemed in the twilight to upbraid;
Pale fingers moved upon the keys—
The ghost-hands of past centuries.

Behind my oaken battlement
Above the door I used to lean,
And watched the puffing crimson hood,
As floated in, full sail, the Dean;
And then the organ breathing low,
Began to murmur soft and slow.

I used to shut my eyes, and hear
 The solemn prophecy and psalm
 Rise up like incense; and I loved
 Before the prayer the lull and calm,
 Till, like a stream that bursts its banks,
 Broke forth brave Purcell's "O give thanks."

I knew those thirteen hundred pipes
 And thirty stops, as blind men do
 The voices of the friends they love,
 The bird's song and the thunder too;
 And the fierce diapason's roar,
 Like storms upon a rocky shore.

And now to-day I yield me up
 The dusty seat, my old loved throne,
 Unto another; and no more
 Shall come here in the dusk alone,
 Or in the early matin hour,
 To hear my old friend's voice of power.

And yet methinks that, centuries hence,
 Lying beneath the chancel floor,
 In that dark nook I shall delight
 To hear the anthem's swell once more,
 And to myself shall calmly smile
 When music floats the vaulted aisles.

Or, mocking gravely at some hand
Less skillful than my own was once,
In my snug nest I'll lie, and mark
The blunders of the foolish dunce;
But to myself the secret keep,
And turn me round again to sleep.

The Nightingale and the Rose

EASTERN LEGEND.

The Nightingale loved the rose, and whenever a blossom was plucked from her stem, he, knowing that his lady love was suffering, is said to have given forth a plaintive cry.

One day all the birds appeared before King Solomon, and complained of the wailing of the Nightingale—that it drove away all sleep from their eyelids.

When questioned by King Solomon, the Nightingale said that his love for the rose was so great his heart cried out in agony whenever he knew she was suffering.

Then said King Solomon, “Never more shall the rose suffer when her blossoms are plucked—therefore cease thy complaint.”

From that hour, the blossoms can be picked without causing suffering to the flower, and the slumber of all the birds is unbroken by the wailing of the Nightingale.

The Legend of the Lockharts

I.

King Robert on his death bed lay, wasted in
every limb,
The priests had left, Black Douglas now alone
was watching him;
The earl had wept to hear those words, "When
I am gone to doom
Take thou my heart and bear it straight unto
the Holy Tomb."

II.

Douglas shed bitter tears of grief—he loved
the buried man,
So bade farewell to home and wife, to brother
and to clan;
And soon the Bruce's heart, embalmed, in silver
casket locked
Within a galley white with sails, upon the
blue waves rocked.

III.

In Spain they rested; there the king besought
the Scottish earl,

To drive the Saracens from Spain, his galley
 sails to furl:
 It was the brave knight's eagerness to quell the
 Paynim brood
 That made him then forget the oath he'd sworn
 upon the Rood.

IV.

That was his sin: good angels frowned upon
 him as he went
 With vizor down and spear in rest, lips closed,
 and black brow bent;
 Upon the turbans fierce he spurred, the charger
 he bestrode
 Was splashed with blood, their robes and flags
 he trampled on the road.

V.

The Moors came fast with cymbal-clash and
 tossing javelin,
 Ten thousand horsemen, at the least, round
 Castile closing in;
 Quick as a deer's foot snaps the ice Black
 Douglas thundered through,
 And struck with sword and smote with axe
 among the heathen crew.

VI.

The horse-tail banners beaten down, the
mounted archers fled.
There came full many an Arab curse from faces
smeared with red:
The vizor fell, a Scottish shaft had struck him
on the breast;
Many a Moslem's frightened horse was bleed-
ing head and chest.

VII.

But suddenly the caitiffs turned and gathered
like a net,
In closed the tossing sabres fast, and soon were
crimson wet;
Steel jarred on steel—war hammers smote on
helmet and on sword;
Yet Douglas never ceased to charge upon that
heathen horde.

VIII.

Till all at once his eager eye discerned amid
the fight
St. Clair of Roslyn, Bruce's friend, a brave
and trusty knight,

Beset with Moors who hewed at him with
sabres dripping blood—

'Twas in a rice field where he stood, close to
an orange wood.

IX.

Then to the rescue of St. Clair, Black Douglas
spurred amain:

The Moslems circled him around, and shouting
charged again;

Then took he from his neck the heart, and
as the case he threw,

"Pass first in fight," he cried aloud, "as thou
wert wont to do!"

X.

They found him ere the sun had set upon that
fatal day;

His body was above the case, that closely
guarded lay,

His swarthy face was grim in death, his sable
hair was stained

With the life-blood of the felon Moors, whom
he had struck and brained.

XI.

Sir Simon Lockhart, knight of Lee, bore home
the silver case,
To shrine it in a stately grave and in a holy
place.
The Douglas deep in Spanish grounds they left
in royal tomb,
To wait in hope and patient trust the trumpet
of the Doom.

The Lily of the Valley

FROM THE FRENCH.

The "Valley Lily," that early notifier of Spring's advent, has a touch of romance in its history, wherein fairies play a part.

It is stated that on one occasion these sprites of the forest and stream gave a dance upon the greensward. Each took with her a tiny cup in which to gather dew for the fairy queen's breakfast. Now, one of the inexorable laws of the fairies is that the sun must never find them abroad.

On this occasion their revelry ran so high that the sun sparkled upon the dew-drops and dried them up before ever their dancing ceased.

Then each fairy ran in dismay to the blade of grass on which she had hung her tiny white cup—but lo! they were hard and fast to the green stalks, and could not be removed.

The little fairies fell to crying, for each feared the anger of the queen, who would have to go without her breakfast.

Soon the fairy godmother came upon the scene, and, seeing the distress of her god-

children, she touched the blades of grass, which changed into broad green leaves, thus concealing the cups from the queen's vision, and saving her tiny subjects from the queenly ire.

Hence we have "Lilies of the Valley."

Guido's Model

I.

Guido Reni in a Roman Palace chamber
Sat one pleasant Summer afternoon
(’Twas the old Farnese’s sumptuous palace).
The walls were blazoned with the gilded moon
In crescent, and sweet tangles of those flowers
That blossom into faces, while birds play,
Fluttering from twig to twig, and lizard’s run
Below, and jewelled beetles crawl from spray
to spray.

II.

The great hall window, reaching to the floor,
Stood open for the vine to ramble in;
The birds were in the garden down below;
The silver columned fountain, tall and thin
As a magician’s wand, rose in the air;
Great yellow clouds, laden with sunshine
passed;
The sky, one flawless sapphire, floated there.

III.

Guido was painting, half entranced in thought;
Quietly painting that pure, gentle face

You've seen in lonely chapels oft and oft;
 Calm, sweet, and radiant, with a saintly grace;
 Chaste as a virgin martyr glorified;
 Without one thought of earth, pure as the snow
 Upon the Alp-peak, with no stain of sin
 Sullyng her form, save where one raptured
 glow

IV.

Of coldest sunshine lit her marbly breast;
 The dove-like eyes were all intent on heaven.
 A Sabbath sanctity was in the air,
 And not one glare of Passion's burning leven.
 Where was the proud and dark-eyed beauty
 then,
 The painter's model? Where the peasant girl
 All love and happiness? Where, then, was she
 With throbbing bosom and with lavish curl?

V.

Only a blear-eyed crone in a low chair,
 Facing the central window, dozed or prayed.
 Her cheeks were wrinkled leather, and her hair,
 In one gray half-starved knot of grizzled braid,
 Crowned her old, nodding, semi-palsied head.
 Her breviary was resting on her knees,
 Nor recked she what the chiding painter said.

VI.

In came the cardinal, grave and coldly wise.
His scarlet gown and robes of cobweb lace
Trailed on the marble floor; with convex glass
He bent o'er Guido's shoulder; soon his face
Grew wistful, and then curled to a smile,
As he beheld the crone and looked again.
Where is thy model, Guido? Guido said,
I keep her, cardinal, locked up in my brain.

The Violet

FROM THE GERMAN.

In the old German town of Nuremberg there lived three sisters. Two were vain, frivolous, and cruel; the third, a gentle child, unselfish and loved by all who knew her.

As she was one day walking in the forest, she heard a plaintive cry, and ever ready to assist those in trouble, immediately hastened in the direction of the sound.

A wood pigeon had become entangled in a bush and was vainly endeavoring to extricate her wings. The kind-hearted little maid released the poor bird and the pigeon at once became a beautiful fairy. She explained that being pursued by a wicked elf, she had taken the form of a pigeon the better to escape her enemy.

"Now," said the fairy, "ask me whatever you will, and it shall be granted."

"Give me, then," said the poor little maid, "who had suffered much from the cruelty of her sisters,—give me the peace and happiness which my heart has long desired and sought for in vain."

“Go to the rainbow,” directed the fairy, “and where the violet color touches the earth, there shall you find a plant which will bring to you the desired gifts.”

Then ran eagerly the little girl and did as she was told, and there, at the end of the rainbow, where the violet color touches the earth, grew a cluster of modest wood violets. She placed them over her heart,—peace and happiness forever after attended her footsteps, and violets have since that time possessed the power of bringing these priceless gifts to any maiden who will wear them over her heart.

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The Great West Window

AN OLD CATHEDRAL LEGEND.

I.

The great west window was framed and done;
How proud was its painter, Father John!
The watchings by night at the furnace door,
The long day's ponderings, all were o'er;
The fires were quenched, and the fluxes and
paints,
The tracings of monarch, and prophets, and
saints
Were rolled and labeled, and hidden away,
And life for Friar John was all holiday;
His brushes were thrown in the nettly croft,
And so was the palette he'd used so oft.
But when he saw that shining rood
Glow like sunset seen through a wood,
There rose in his soul a wicked pride,
And his heart beat quick with a fuller tide,
Nor thought Friar John, as his work he eyed,
If God in that work was glorified.

II.

The window was a wondrous thing
Blooming with an eternal spring
Of jewel colours and precious dyes,
Deep and rich as the western skies
Such as the depths of the forest hide;
Lapis-sapphire for martyr's robe;
Scarlet for Herod's fiery pride;
Ruby for Michael's flaming sword;
Golden splendour for crown and globe
Of David, the chosen of the Lord;
Amethyst, emerald, peacock's dyes,
At summer sunsets, and hues of flowers
That start up purple after the showers—
The roses's crimson and iris bloom;
Sunny lustres, and topaz gloom,
Encircling a pale, sad face;
A glory lighting it shed from skies
That shone like God's own dwelling place:
And all these burned and melted so,
That there was within a kingly glow,
A pulse of light, a life-blood flowing
Its varied colours ever showing.

III.

What wonder, then, that as John gazed,
As in a mirror, he saw upraised
The veil that hides the spirit world,
And the dim curtain slowly furled,
Showing behind that crystal wall,
Fiends that danced and mocked at his fall;
Wild monsters beaked, and fanged, and horned,
Goblins that him and his glass saints scorned;
And sneering Satan above them all.
But Friar John prayed full loud and long,
And chanted many a holy song,
And read his vesper service through,
Ave and Pater not a few,
Till heaven opened, and angel and saint
Came to comfort that sinner faint,
With prayer and promise; and now again,
With purer eye and calmer brain,
He looked, and through the coloured screen
That parted earth from heaven's serene,
He saw, through flushes of rainbow dyes,
The opening gates of Paradise.

4

The Goldenrod

BAVARIAN LORE.

The goldenrod has a romance connected with its early being. A beautiful young girl living in the Bavarian Tyrol was once wandering over the highlands in search of her lost lover.

All the day and all the night she cried for her dear ones, who were far away.

Finally becoming exhausted, she fell upon the ground, and was at once wrapped in slumber. She slept on and on, the leaves blown by the autumn wind covered her with a soft mantle of brown; while the snow falling from the blue sky buried her out of sight. One tress, however, of golden hair escaping, lay upon the ground.

As a fairy was one day passing by, she saw the lock of shining hair, and winding it around her wand, said as she placed it in the ground and breathed upon it a fairy benediction, "I name thee Golden Rod."

Staufenberg

(A LEGEND OF THE RHINE.)

In feudal days there lived in the renowned castle of Staufenberg a knight famed for his strength and bravery.

While hunting one day in the forest, he lost his way, and arrived tired and nearly fainting at a spring situated in the heart of the woods.

The water flowed beneath the rich foliage of luxurious herbs, while a soft, fragrant moss covered the ground around. Rejoiced at finding so charming and shadowy a haunt quite appropriate for the flight of his imagination, the knight approached the spring, and moistened his lips with its crystal fluid; he then walked along the brook, to seek its source.

Suddenly he discovered a lovely young girl sitting under a stately oak, wringing out her wet hair and braiding it.

The youth, almost dazzled by the beautiful vision, stopped, scarcely daring to breathe. His heart beat audibly, and his looks were intently riveted upon the forest-child, who was as yet unconscious of his presence.

At last recovering his presence of mind, he stepped softly forward, eager to know who she was, and why she thus lived in the solitude of the woods. She looked up and with a charming blush prepared to move quickly away.

With stammering voice, he asked if she would permit him to rest for a few moments near her at the spring, as he was weary from his long ride through the forest. "Noble sir," said the girl kindly, "you are the lord of this ground, and I must thank you for having allowed *me* to remain here.'

"Oh, that I could render this place a paradise, that you might never wish to leave it," responded the knight. "Since I saw you, it has indeed become a paradise for me," added he tenderly. "Do not turn away, sweet maid; and forgive me if I have admired your lovely face too long. A strange and charming dream filled my heart; it seemed to me as if I were the only happy being permitted to view your lovely face. I ask your pardon that I can no longer conceal my thoughts. I love you deeply and dearly, and would be the happiest of men, if you would accept me as your husband, and become the lady of my castle."

The youth, after having confessed his love, took the hand of the maiden, raised it reverently to his lips, and with eager entreaties and kind words, begged her to consent to his proposal. "Oh, speak!" exclaimed he. "Dare I hope, or must I fear? Can you not love me? Disperse the doubts which render me unhappy."

"I love you," whispered she, tenderly, turning her face towards him, and resting her eyes upon the happy youth. "I have loved you longer than you imagine!"

"Then you will consent to be my wife?"

"I dare not tell you to-day; come to-morrow at the same hour, and you shall have my answer.

He quickly arose, kissed her gently, and hastened away, for he feared to disobey her.

On the next day, at the same hour, he returned to the spring, where he found his beloved,—her lovely hair adorned with a wreath of wild flowers,—awaiting his coming.

With sweet smiles she offered him her pretty hand, and invited him to sit by her side. She then informed him that she was a water-nymph, and goddess of that spring, that she had long loved him, and would esteem it the highest happiness to reign over his heart forever.

“And if, noble sir, you still wish to make me your wife, I will follow you everywhere, only”—and when she said this, a melancholy expression covered her face—“only you must love me faithfully, for if not, it will mean death to you, and eternal woe to me.”

“Faithful unto death!” cried the youth, drawing her tenderly to his heart, and covering her sweet face with kisses. “Never shall another conquer this heart which is thine forever.”

The marriage ceremony was celebrated silently and without pomp or splendour. True happiness requires no outward show, which is often used to conceal the woe of the heart. The young pair were happy in each other's love; the world had no cares for them, and their life was a heaven. They seemed to gain in youth, and their love for each other to increase day by day. Alas! oftentimes the higher the happiness, the nearer the woe!

War broke out about this time in France, and many knights and nobles of Germany, allured by gain and glory, were prompted to leave their homes, and take arms for the defense of their country.

The Knight of Staufenberg also heard the news, and ambition, like a sad summoner, stirred his soul, and seemed to reproach him for allowing the sword of his ancestors to rust in its scabbard, while other knights gained glory by their valiant deeds.

He became restless, and his mind tormented and distracted; even the smiles of his young wife had not the same charm for him as formerly.

With silent grief she perceived that the mind of her young husband was not content with domestic happiness, and that his thoughts were centered in the seat of war.

The knight did his utmost to conceal his longing, but could not help betraying himself in unguarded moments, which encouraged his wife to carry out the plan she had formed.

She presented him one day with a splendid belt, which she had worked, and begged him to wear it in battle as a token of her love.

"I know," said she, "you long to depart for France, to wield the sword of your ancestors in battle. Although it grieves me to part from you, I agree, nevertheless, that you shall satisfy your ambition, which I fear will destroy our happiness. Go, dear husband; gain laurels

and glory by valiant deeds, but return, and then learn that the happiness which you enjoy at my side is far better than that to be found amongst strangers."

The knight, touched by her generosity and devotion, drew her to his heart and kissed the tears from her cheeks. "Thank you, my love," exclaimed he. "You read my soul, and seem to know how the desire to do honor to the name of my ancestors and our rank thrills my soul. It calls me to battle, and my sword reproaches me for lingering. I therefore accept your belt as a sign of good fortune. My beloved gave it, and it will guide me back to her."

"Now go," said the wife; "think often of me, of our happy life together, and remember my warning before I became your wife."

"Always!" swore the knight, whose eyes were bathed in tears. "Never shall I forget thee and I will love you faithfully."

With tender kisses, the knight sealed his vows of fidelity and commenced to prepare for his departure.

It was only when time for the final parting came, that the priceless value of a fond and

loving wife was borne in upon the heart of the knight.

Had not ambition blinded him, he would have remained in his castle and enjoyed the happiness, the companionship of such a wife afforded; but after a long leave-taking from her, he departed with full speed for an unknown country, where his fancy showed him brilliant sections of glory, splendour and battle.

Before him he saw the future; if he looked back from his steed, he perceived his wife waving him a farewell, thereby driving from his mind all thoughts of the dangers of war.

At last the forest hid the castle from his view. He then put spurs to his steed, crying "Onward, soldiers; before us lies glory, behind us, love; the sooner we gain the first, the sooner shall we enjoy the latter."

And "Onward!" echoed from his bearded followers, who spurred their horses as they galloped madly forward.

After his arrival in France, the Staufenberg knight placed himself and his troop at the disposal of a duke of that country, and distinguished himself by his valor and prudence to such an extent that the duke was desirous

of attaching this valiant and honest warrior permanently to his cause.

But what to offer him as an inducement to exchange his freedom for a vassalage, had puzzled the duke for some time; when one day he perceived his youngest daughter looking at the handsome young knight with glances more tender and affectionate than she was wont to cast upon the other knights. The duke saw that a union between his daughter and the Knight of Staufenberg would be the easiest way of realizing his wish, and therefore offered, as a reward for his services, the hand of the maid, whose youth, beauty, and noble rank rendered her worthy of the highest in the land.

The knight, whose simple mind was already dazzled by the splendour of the Franconian court, accepted the offer with a feeling of satisfied vanity. It flattered him to be chosen as the husband of a young and beautiful princess; he was dazzled by the glitter of the crown she wore, as well as by the splendour of the court, and he entirely forgot the promise to his lovely wife. He surrendered himself to the intoxicating round of pleasures which the duke prepared for him, and did not resist or reflect upon the changes which his heart had under-

gone. It was only at night when his eye was not dazzled by the view of the brilliant festivities, that a pale figure arose in his mind and looked at him with sorrowing eyes. Although he so often tried to banish this vision and avoid the expressive looks of his injured wife, he failed. Her eyes followed him with looks more of reproach than anger. He became unsettled and discontented. He remembered his beautiful wife, and the happy days which he had passed in the old Staufenberg castle; and comparing all this with the restless life of the court, and his insatiable desire for its gaiety, he began to realize that his castle contained a higher treasure than a crown, even if it were on the head of the most beautiful maiden. He formed the best resolutions, vowing to return home, and to fly from the seductions of the court; but at daybreak, the images of the night vanished before the brightness of the sun; shame prevented him from taking his leave, and he felt himself attracted anew by the charms of his promised bride.

Weeks thus passed in painful struggles with his conscience; he became melancholy and dejected, and was unable, even when at the side of the princess, to banish his grief.

He at last resolved to ask the advice of a priest, and communicate his sorrows to him.

The priest listened with astonishment to the knight's tale, at the conclusion of which his cheeks grew paler and paler, and he exclaimed with holy fear, at the same time crossing himself thrice:

"You have made an alliance with the evil one. Angels and heavenly spirits have forsaken you. Your soul is forfeited to the devil, and I consider it my duty, if you do not abjure the union with your wife, and do penance, to withhold the benefits of the church from you."

Half persuaded, half infatuated with the idea, he consented to abjure his wife, and the duke, in agreement with the priest, arranged the day on which the knight should be entirely freed from the bonds of Satan, by marrying the princess.

As the marriage day approached, the embarrassment of the knight grew more painful. His mind worked like a nightmare, and the looks of his abjured wife appeared to him in his dreams more and more sorrowful. As the wedding day approached, and the bride, attired in silk and adorned with costly

jewels, received him, she felt that her smile had no charms for him; and when he bent to kiss her hand, it seemed to him like a hand of marble, and with a ghastly look, he staggered back.

The marriage procession was obliged to pass over a bridge on the way to the church, and as the bridegroom stepped onto the bridge, a flash of lightning glanced before him. The storm raged wildly, and the torrent rose to his horse's hoofs. The animal plunged and reared through fear, and sprang into the foaming waters. The storm abated, the sun shone forth, and the stream rolled under the bridge whereon the trembling bride and her attendants stood.

It was at the same hour that a fierce storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning, raged over Staufenberg, and when it had ceased, the lady of the castle could not be found.

Nobody knew whither she had gone; but at midnight loud weeping was heard in the castle, and from a lonely tower came a voice which seemed to whisper, "Woe to faithless lovers."

The Schoolboy King

A LEGEND OF NAPOLEON.

(*A Scene at Brienne.*)

I.

Le Pere Petrault shut Virgil up
Just as the clock struck ten:
"This little Bonaparte," he said,
"Is one of Plutarch's men.
To see him with his massive head,
Gripped mouth, and swelling brow,
Wrestle with Euclid—there he sat
Not half an hour from now."

II.

The good old pedagogue his book
Put slowly in its place:
"That Corsican," he said, "has eyes
Like burning glasses; race
Italian, as his mother said;
Barred up from friend and foe,
He toils all night, inflexible
Forging it blow by blow.

III.

I know his trick of thought, the way
He covers up his mouth :
One hand like this, the other clenched—
Those eyes of the hot South.
The little Caesar, how he strides,
Sleep—walking in the sun,
Only awaking at the roar
Of the meridian gun.

IV.

I watched him underneath my book
That day he sprung the mine,
For when the earth-wall rocked and reeled
His eyes were all a-shine;
And when it slowly toppled down,
He leaped upon the heap
With fiery haste—just as a wolf
Would spring upon a sheep.

V.

Pichegru, Napoleon's monitor,
Tells me he's dull and calm,
Tenacious, firm, submissive—yes,
Our chain is on his arm.

Volcanic natures such as his
 I dread;—may God direct
 This boy to good—the evil quell—
 His better will direct.

VI.

Here is his Euclid book—the ink
 Still wet upon the rings;
 These are the talismans some day
 He'll use to fetter kings.
 To train a genius like this lad
 I've prayed for years—for years;
 But now I know not whether hopes
 Are not half choked by fears.

VII.

Last Monday, when they built that fort
 With bastions of snow,
 The ditch, and spur, and ravelin
 And terraced row on row,
 'Twas Bonaparte who cut the trench,
 Who shaped the line of sap—
 A year or two, and he will be
 First in war's bloody gap.

VIII.

I see him now upon the hill,
His hands behind his back,
Waving the tricolor that led
The vanguard of attack;
And there, upon the trampled earth,
The ruins of the fort,
This Bonaparte, the schoolboy king,
Held his victorious court.

IX.

To see him give the shouting crowd
His little hand to kiss,
You'd think him never meant by God
For any lot but this.
And then with loud exulting cheers
Upon their shoulders borne,
He rode with buried Caesar's pride
And Alexander's scorn.

X.

Ah! I remember, too, the day
The fire balloon went up;
It burned away into a star
Ere I went off to sup;

But he stood weeping there alone
Until the dark night came,
To think he had not wings to fly
And catch the passing flame.

XI.

Oh! he is meant for mighty things
This leader of my class;—
But there's the bell that rings for me,
So let the matter pass.
You see that third-floor window lit,
The blind drawn half-way down;
That's Bonaparte's—he's at it now—
It makes the dunces frown."

“ Books are the truest of friends ”

—EPICTETUS



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